



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**For Immediate Release**

Tuesday - January 6, 2004

**SARASOTA MAN INDICTED ON WEAPONS CHARGES**

U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today the indictment of Wassam Taysir Hammoud of Sarasota, on federal firearms charges. The eight count indictment includes charges of possession of firearms by a convicted felon, possession, manufacture and transfer of a silencer, and transfer of a firearm for use in a crime of violence. The maximum sentence, if convicted, on the firearms charges ranges from five to ten years' imprisonment.

Hammoud was arrested on weapons charges based on a criminal complaint on January 2, 2004. In the complaint he was also charged with solicitation to commit murder. The government is continuing its investigation of that charge.

In September 2001, Hammoud was indicted on charges that he sold a machine gun and short barrel shotgun to an undercover ATF agent. He was convicted by a jury in June 2002 and then sentenced in December 2002 to one year house arrest and five years' probation. According to court documents Hammoud made statements to a confidential

witness on December 22, 2003 that he was unjustly arrested and wanted to kill a confidential informant and an ATF agent. After a further investigation was conducted, Hammoud was arrested on January 2, 2004 at his business in Sarasota.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), the Southwest Florida Domestic Security Task Force, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, and the Sarasota Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay Hoffer.

Indictments and criminal complaints are merely formal charges that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.

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